

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY LONDON
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 0955

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PGOV ET
SUBJ: REVISED PROCLAMATION DEFINING NEW PMAC POWERS AND
RESPONSIBILITIES

REF: A) ADDIS ABABA 0888 (NOTAL) B) ADDIS ABABA 0021 (NOTAL)
C) ADDIS ABABA 0041 (NOTAL) 76 ADDIS ABABA 12642 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: WEEK-LONG PROVISIONAL MILITARY ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL
(PMAC) MEETINGS TO REORGANIZE PMAC TO REFLECT REALITIES
FOLLOWING FEB 3 EXECUTIONS RESULTED IN PUBLICATION BY MEDIA
FEB 12 OF NEW PROCLAMATION REVISING DECEMBER 29, 1976
PMAC PROCLAMATION. NEW PROCLAMATIONS COMBINES FORMER RESPONSIBILITIES, POWERS AND DUTIES OF PMAC CHAIRMAN AND FIRST VICE-CHAIRMAN UNDER PMAC CHAIRMAN AND GIVES CHAIRMAN POWER TO TAKE MEASURE AGAINST COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARIES AND ENEMIES OF PEOPLE.
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VICE-CHAIRMAN DUTIES SAME AS FORMER 2ND VICE-CHAIRMAN WITH NEW DIRECTIVES TO ARM REVOLUTIONARY DEFENSE SQUADS AND ENSURE COUNTRY'S DEFENSES ARMED ALONG MODERN LINES. MINISTERS BECOME DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE TO COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' CHAIRMAN, AND MINISTRY PERMANENT SECRETARIES ALLOWED TO VOTE IN COUNCIL ON BEHALF OF MINISTERS. AUTHORITY TO CONFIRM OR COMMUTE DEATH SENTENCES AND REMIT PUNISHMENTS TRANSFERRED FROM PMAC CONGRESS TO

PMAC STANDING COMMITTEE, COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY REAFFIRMED IN PROCLAMATION FOR STANDING COMMITTEE, BUT NOT MENTIONED IN DEFINING DUTIES OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE. NEW PROCLAMATION ALMOST WHOLLY PRESERVES DECEMBER 29 PMAC STRUCTURE, WITH ONLY MAJOR DIFFERENCES BEING FURTHER CONCENTRATION OF CHAIRMAN'S POWER, WITHOUT ANY SIGNIFICANT COUNTERWEIGHT, AND DELETION OF SECURITY, INTELLIGENCE, AND SOME DEFENSE RESPONSIBILITIES FROM STANDING AND CENTRAL COMMITTEES. END SUMMARY.

1. AS PUBLISHED IN MEDIA, PMAC STRUCTURE WHICH HAS EMERGED FROM PAST WEEK'S PMAC MEETINGS REMARKABLY SIMILAR TO DECEMBER 29 PMAC RESTRUCTURING. MOST SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT IS CONCENTRATION OF POWER UNDER PMAC CHAIRMAN. CHAIRMAN RETAINS FORMER RESPONSIBILITIES SUCH AS HEAD OF STATE, CHAIRMAN OF PMAC CONGRESS, CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF ARMED FORCES, AUTHORITY TO CONVENE DEFENSE SECURITY AND COUNCIL, TO SUPERVISE IMPLEMENTATION OF PMAC DECISIONS, AND TO APPOINT HIGH OFFICIALS AND GIVE PROMOTIONS. IN ADDITION, CHAIRMAN ASSUMES RESPONSIBILITY TO CONVENE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, TO SUBMIT DECISIONS BY COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ON MAJOR ISSUES TO PERTINENT PMAC BODY, AND TO TAKE MEASURES AGAINST COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARIES AND ENEMIES OF PEOPLE. COMPOSITION OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS SAME AS IN PAST WITH COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS DECISIONS. PROCLAMATION GIVES IMPRESSION THAT PMAC CHAIRMAN WILL ALSO FUNCTION AS COUNCIL CHAIRMAN, BUT IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR ON THIS POINT.

2. UNDER NEW PROCLAMATION THERE ONLY ONE VICE-CHAIRMAN. HIS
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DUTIES COMPARABLE TO THOSE OF 2ND VICE-CHAIRMAN UNDER DEC 29 PROCLAMATION, EXCEPT THAT HE IS NOW ALSO DIRECTED TO ARM REVOLUTIONARY DEFENSE SQUADS AND TO ENSURE THAT ETHIOPIA'S DEFENSES ARE ARMED ALONG MODERN LINES.

3. POSITION OF PMAC SECRETARY-GENERAL REMAINS SAME. CIVILIAN MINISTERS NOW DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE TO COUNCIL OF MINISTERS CHAIRMAN, OTHERWISE RESPONSIBILITIES REMAIN SAME. MINISTRY PERMANENT SECRETARIES WILL BE ALLOWED TO VOTE ON BEHALF OF MINISTER IN LATTER'S ABSENCE, SIMILAR TO PAST.

4. CONFIRMATION OR COMMUTATION OF DEATH SENTENCES AND AUTHORITY TO REMIT PUNISHMENTS, PREVIOUSLY A FUNCTION OF ENTIRE PMAC CONGRESS, NOW TRANSFERRED TO CONSOLIDATED 16-MEMBER PMAC STANDING COMMITTEE. (THIS ISSUE ALLEGEDLY ONE OF MAJOR CAUSES FOR ORIGINAL PMAC RESTRUCTURING BECAUSE OF DISCONTENT WITH MENGISTU'S ARBITRARY AND PERSONALIZED DECISION MAKING. UNDER NEW ARRANGEMENT, STANDING COMMITTEE APPARENTLY STILL RETAINS SOME ELEMENT OF CHECKS AND BALANCES OVER MENGISTU.) IN APPARENT EFFORT TO

FURTHER CONCENTRATE ACTUAL POWER, RESPONSIBILITY FOR COUNTRY'S DEFENSE AND INTELLIGENCE SERVICE HAVE BEEN TAKEN AWAY FROM STANDING COMMITTEE AND CENTRAL COMMITTEE. WHILE REAFFIRMING COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY OF STANDING COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, THERE IS NO REFERENCE TO COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN DESCRIPTION OF FUNCTIONS OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE. OTHERWISE, FUNCTIONS OF PMAC CONGRESS, CENTRAL COMMITTEE, STANDING COMMITTEE, AND COUNCIL OF MINISTERS UNCHANGED.

5. COMMENT: ACTUAL POWER STRUCTURE WITHIN PMAC NOW ACCURATELY REFLECTED IN NEW PROCLAMATION. MENGISTU AS PMAC CHAIRMAN HAS OBVIOUSLY GAINED NEARLY COMPLETE CONTROL OF PMAC STRUCTURE, IN FACT AS WELL AS ON PAPER. POWERS FORMERLY DIVIDED AMONG PMAC CHAIRMAN AND TWO VICE-CHAIRMAN TO BALANCE EACH OTHER AND PROVIDE GREATER COLLECTIVE AND DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP, APPEAR ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY UNDER MENGISTU'S CONTROL. ALTHOUGH ATNAFU HAS NOT LOST ANY POWER ON PAPER, HIS POSITION IS NOW CLEARLY
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SUBORDINATE. DELETION OF MOST SECURITY, INTELLIGENCE AND NATIONAL DEFENSE RESPONSIBILITIES FROM STANDING AND CENTRAL COMMITTEES IS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF MENGISTU'S CONTROL OF PMAC. THERE IS NO INDICATION AS YET OF COMPOSITION OF NEW 16 MEMBER STANDING COMMITTEE, NOR OF NEW PMAC COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN TO REPLACE THOSE EXECUTED, IF INDEED LATTER HAVE BEEN REPLACED AT ALL. WE UNDERSTAND MOFA'S LIAISON CONTACT ON CIRG IS MAJOR BERHANU BAYEH, AT LEAST FOR TIME BEING.
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Message Attributes

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